

**Notice of Intent to Repatriate Cultural Items in the Possession of the USDA Forest Service.**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior

**ACTION:** Notice.

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Notice is hereby given under provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of the intent to repatriate cultural items in the possession of the Cibola National Forest, USDA Forest Service, that meet the definition of "sacred object" under Section 2 of the Act.

The items consist of 30 essentially complete prayer sticks of aspen and willow, 5 fragments of prayer sticks, one red flicker feather, one cornhusk, and a small amount of deteriorating organic matter. The items were reportedly gathered in 1977 or 1978 by an anonymous collector from a cairn/shrine on Mt. Taylor, NM. The items were returned to the possession of the USDA Forest Service in 1991 or 1992. The precise location of the cairn/shrine is not known.

The objects in this collection resemble the prayer sticks described and illustrated in Leslie A. White's *The Acoma Indians* (Smithsonian Institution, 1932: 126-129). Representatives of the Pueblo of Acoma have inspected the items and confirm their identification as prayer sticks. The representatives of the Pueblo of Acoma indicate that prayer sticks are left as offerings at a cairn/shrine located on Mt. Taylor as part of their traditional religious practice. Once left as an offering, the Acoma religion requires that such prayer sticks not be disturbed.

Reginald T. Pasqual, governor of the Pueblo of Acoma, has claimed the prayer sticks and associated materials as sacred objects and requested their repatriation to the Pueblo of Acoma. The Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation have been consulted and both support the claim of the Pueblo of Acoma to this particular collection of prayer sticks from Mt. Taylor.

Based on the above mentioned information, officials of the USDA Forest Service have determined, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3001 (3)(C), that these items are specific ceremonial objects needed by the traditional religious leaders of the Pueblo of Acoma for the practice of their traditional religion by its present day adherents. Officials of the USDA Forest Service have further determined, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3001 (2), that there is a relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced between these items and the Pueblo of Acoma.

This notice has been sent to officials of the Pueblo of Acoma. Representatives of any other Indian tribe which believes itself to be culturally affiliated with these cultural items should contact Dr. Frank E. Wozniak, NAGPRA Coordinator, Southwestern Region, USDA Forest Service, 517 Gold Avenue, S.W., Albuquerque, NM 87102, telephone: (505) 842-3238, before December 2, 1994. Repatriation of these sacred objects to the Pueblo of Acoma may begin after that date if no additional claimants come forward.

Dated: October 12, 1994

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